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INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS PRIORITY  
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY 0132  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 4483  
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY 0037  
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY 0085  
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 1552  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 1445  
RUEHRB/AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY 0064  
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY 0213  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 1110  
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON PRIORITY 2005  
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL PRIORITY 0021  
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY 0054  
RUEHBA/AMCONSUL PERTH PRIORITY 0444

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 003153

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DEPT FOR EAP, EAP/MTS, EAP/MLS, INR/EAP, INR/B, INR/I  
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/14/2017  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [KISL](#) [PINR](#) [ID](#)  
SUBJECT: POLITICAL ISLAM -- KEY PARTY EYES NATIONAL  
ELECTIONS IN 2009 (C-DI7-01898)

REF: A. STATE 151319

- [1](#)B. JAKARTA 1157
- [1](#)C. JAKARTA 2166

Classified By: Pol/C Joseph Legend Novak, reasons 1.4(b,d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: The Islamist-oriented Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) emerged as a political force in Indonesia by capturing eight percent of parliamentary seats in 2004. PKS campaigned on an anti-corruption platform, but has thus far failed to deliver on its clean governance promise. A 55-person council makes all of PKS' strategic decisions and will--we understand--try to broaden the party's message in order to enhance performance in the 2009 national elections. Women play a relatively marginal role in the leadership structure of the party, though PKS has recently beefed-up efforts to attract female voters. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (SBU) This message answers questions in Ref A requesting information on Islamist-oriented parties world-wide, including Indonesia's PKS.

FROM PIETY TO PRAGMATISM

[1](#)3. (C) PKS engineered its successful 2004 electoral performance largely by scrapping its conservative, Islamic public bent for a more pragmatic political persona--the party of clean governance. In the lead-up to the 2004 legislative elections, PKS barnstormed the country with a brand new anti-corruption platform, tapping into growing national disenchantment with the prevalence of corruption at all levels of government. The strategy paid handsome dividends--and by capturing 45 of the Indonesian national legislature's 550 seats (rising from one percent in 1999 to seven percent of total membership in the process)--PKS instantly became a force to be reckoned with.

[1](#)4. (C) Despite the well packaged anti-corruption campaign message, the party has thus far failed to deliver on its clean governance promise. Far from leading the battle against corruption in Indonesia, PKS has instead become

virtually indistinguishable from its party peers in terms of its reliance on money politics. As noted in Ref B, the party sold its support to the highest bidder in the high stakes 2007 Jakarta Governor's race, and Mission contacts consistently report that PKS legislators refuse to act on laws without receiving financial "encouragement" first. (Note: The PKS candidate lost the Jakarta Governor's race, but--despite the taint of money politics--captured nearly 45 percent of the vote.) By all accounts, a "sweep out the bums" party orientation has quickly given way to "if you can't beat them, join them."

#### AN OPAQUE LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE

15. (C) A 55-person Syuro Council (Majelis Syuro -- or "Shura" in Arabic) makes all of the party's key decisions. The opaque governing body--members are appointed for five-year terms--meets approximately four times a year. The Syuro Council developed the 2004 anti-corruption campaign platform, and according to PKS legislator Zulkieflimansyah, is developing a new campaign theme for the 2009 national legislative elections with an eye on expanding the party's relatively limited support base. The party is not expected to compete for the presidency in 2009, though a former party chair is considered vice presidential timber.

#### A CHICKEN IN EVERY POT?

16. (C) PKS legislator Zulkieflimansyah told emboffs that the 2009 platform will more directly address an issue of overriding interest to many Indonesians--poverty reduction. While still a staple of the party's identity, the anti-corruption campaign could only take the party so far.

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According to Zulkieflimansyah, the party would work to develop a strategy to create jobs and reduce unemployment. Zulkieflimansyah conceded that the party had so far failed to articulate a real economic strategy and underscored that party thinking on the issue was evolving.

17. (C) Zulkieflimansyah told emboffs that PKS would need to work with Western investors to tackle the job creation issue. That effort would likely have to include a loosening of the country's strict labor laws, though he quickly added that such a move was politically untenable at present for any party or leader. Nevertheless, according to Zulkieflimansyah, the party embraced the idea of economic growth and would work on packaging its economic policies in a way that would appeal to voters.

#### PKS GENDER POLICIES

18. (C) Women play virtually no role in the PKS leadership structure. According to Mission contacts, none of the 55 members of the Syuro Council are women. The party's three cabinet ministers are also all men. Of the party's 45 legislators, only three, or seven percent, are women (women hold 12 percent of legislative seats overall). Arguably, the only leadership role a female PKS party member has taken in recent memory was last year when parliamentarian Yoyoh Yusroh publicly backed a controversial draft "pornographic acts" law with the potential to restrict the rights of women. (Note: The proposed law, if applied rigorously, could have been used to prohibit dancing, indigenous clothing in some parts of the country, and public acts of affection, among other things.)

19. (C) Despite the yawning gap between the role of men and women in the PKS hierarchy, the party recognizes the importance of female voters and has taken strides to build up its support among women accordingly. Women comprise 51 percent of the total population in Indonesia and last year PKS established a social organization to recruit potential female votes. According to Zulkieflimansyah, the group--Sarimah--has successfully attracted women by focusing on social policy issues like children's welfare, the

"corrosive effects" of television, etc. Zulkieflimansyah told emboffs that during the recent Jakarta gubernatorial election (Ref C), the group proved its value by turning out the female PKS vote in unprecedented numbers.

LOOKING TOWARD 2009

¶10. (C) With a moderate Islamic image--not a radical one--PKS has been able to take advantage of the growing tilt toward Sunni orthodoxy among Indonesian Muslims in recent years. Despite increasing evidence that the party's stated goal of obtaining 20 percent of the legislative seats in 2009 is unattainable, PKS still seems poised for a strong showing in 2009. Only Golkar--Indonesia's largest party--has a better organized grass root network in place--and with a strong economic agenda and better female voter outreach--PKS is likely to continue to grow in a steady manner.  
HUME